

THE WORLD, AND FOR ALL THE GENERATIONS OF THE WORLD, TO THE END OF TIME; that the system of doctrine and duty which it contains is a fixed and final system, not a progressive one and one introductory to a higher; that the Bible will never become obsolete, and will never be supplemented by any other revelation.

Of course, I do not overlook the fact that this proposition has been most flatly contradicted. You have not forgotten the stir that was made in theological circles a few months ago, when a distinguished divine delivered a sermon upon the Bible, the first sentence of which was this: "The old view of the Bible is fading away from the vision of the age;" and then he went on to argue that the prophecies of the Bible had never been fulfilled; that its miracles were incredible; that the characters it portrayed were forced and unnatural; that many of its narratives were indelicate; and that even the Christ that it revealed was, as he called it, "humanity's evolution of the divine ideal." Well, my friends, if that be so, then I would echo the voice of the preacher, and say: Let the Bible fade. If that be true—if the Bible is nothing more than a collection of cloudy myths, and of unfulfilled prophecies, and of narratives that need censorship and an expurgated edition—if this be true, then, I say, let it fade.

But is it true? Three or four years ago I was making a tour with a dear friend of mine in the Highlands of Scotland, and I was very much surprised, inasmuch as he was a dear lover of natural scenery, to find how indifferent he was to everything that was most attractive in that land of mountain and of field, until one day he said to me, "I am disappointed in this scenery; the colors are not as bright, and the outlines are dim, and, on the whole, I am disappointed." This was astonishing; for there were the fabled Grampians, and the little lakes nestled among the hills, with harmonies in every ripple of their waves. But the explanation of the indifference of my friend was some-

thing very pathetic; he was unconsciously becoming blind. And so, oftentimes, it may be with revelation. There are Sinai, and Calvary, and Tabor, and Hermon, and Carmel, with its flowery top; there is the Lake of Gennesaret, and the river Jordan, not faint and dim, but all bright in the clear light of the serene sun; and yet, even this vision may fade from the spiritual eye that is insensibly becoming blind. The fault may not be, after all, in the scenery of revelation so much as in the vision of the beholder.

I might fill up the limited time allotted to a discourse by quotations from eminent modern writers, who tell us that the Bible has accomplished a very good purpose in the world, and is still accomplishing a good purpose, but that it cannot long satisfy the world's need, because it does not keep pace with the world's progress; that, being filled for the most part with a history of institutions and economies that have passed away, it has not kept pace with the world's progress; and therefore, in the nature of the case, by-and-by the time will come when we shall need a broader basis upon which to construct what these writers and preachers are so fond of calling the religion of the future. The line of argument by which they sustain their position is a very plausible and ingenious one. They call our attention to the fact that the first revelations of God made to men were so exceedingly simple as evidently to be designed for the infancy of the race; but, as the world grew, and as men became more capable of comprehending, God made other revelations according to the expanding capacity of mankind, until the time came when the last book in the canonical Scriptures was written. But they say the world's progress did not end with that event. All the sciences—physical, mental, and moral—have been making advances; new literatures, new phases of political economy, new social problems, new forms of civilization—all these have risen; and inasmuch as the old legal dispensation is not suitable now, nor the old patriarchal